

SECTION 6—ENHANCING THE INVESTIGATION OF MINE ACCIDENTS

This section directs the Secretary of Labor to issue regulations on an expedited basis concerning the investigation of mine accidents. No such regulations currently exist, and so each investigation is ad hoc.

The Secretary is directed to consult widely in developing these regulations—including directly contacting family members who can be identified of any miner who perished in a mining accident of any type in the last 10 years. Miner families are authorized to be involved in all aspects of the investigation, and an advocate is to be appointed to facilitate their participation.

The regulations are to require public hearings be held in connection with any fatal accident or any accident which could have resulted in multiple fatalities.

This section would also authorize a majority of the families of any miners killed in an accident, or an authorized miner representative, to request that an additional investigation be conducted by the Chemical Safety Board or other appropriate federal agency. This would permit a more independent review of major accidents in which MSHA's own conduct may be an issue.

SECTION 7—ENHANCING OPERATOR AND OWNER INCENTIVES TO AVOID SERIOUS RISKS TO MINERS

The bill would direct the Secretary to revise the regulations which layout the process for citing operators who engage in a "pattern of violations." Such a penalty has never been assessed by MSHA despite the number of scoff-laws that have been identified. The changes required by the legislation would ensure that MSHA is required to make decisions on these situations in a timely way, and the Secretary is authorized to withdraw miners from the entire mine until a pattern of violations is corrected. The bill would also significantly increase the penalties for a "pattern of violations" up to \$1 million, and bar the Review Commission from reducing such penalties.

The bill also takes strong action to ensure operators pay their assessed penalties. The bill would forbid operators from contesting citations unless the assessed penalties are placed in escrow, and it would add criminal penalties for failure to pay.

The bill would also establish a minimum penalty of \$500 and a maximum penalty of \$250,000 for other violations. However, if the Secretary determines that the violation could have significantly and substantially contributed to a hazard, the bill would establish the minimum penalty as \$1000 and the maximum penalty as \$500,000. In addition, the bill establishes a penalty of between \$60,000 and \$100,000 for the failure to provide timely notification of accidents. The bill eliminates the requirement of current law that the size of the mine and the impact on an operator's ability to continue in business must be considered in assessing penalties.

SECTION 8—ENHANCING THE WILLINGNESS OF MINERS AND OTHERS TO REPORT SERIOUS PROBLEMS BEFORE ACCIDENTS OCCUR

This would establish a Miner Ombudsman in the Office of the Inspector General in DOL to take safety and health complaints from miners. The purpose of this provision is to help assure miners that their identities will not be compromised if they report mine safety and health problems to the Department.

SECTION 9—ENHANCING SPECIFIC PROTECTIONS FOR UNDERGROUND COAL MINES

This section would require the Secretary to expeditiously revise three existing standards to enhance the protection of underground coal miners.

(a) Conveyor belts and ventilation ("belt-air" rule). The belts that carry coal out of a

mine can ignite a fire or explosion due to friction. The legislation requires MSHA to expeditiously revise its regulations to adopt long-standing recommendations of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health that conveyor belts be designed to minimize flammability. Until the revised rules go into effect, the legislation suspends rules adopted in 2004 that generally permitted increased airflow over these conveyor belts. During this time, MSHA would, however, be permitted to return to its pre-2004 practice of permitting such additional airflow on a mine by mine basis following a public hearing on a request for such a modification.

(b) Seals. Seals are walls constructed in underground coal mines to enclose abandoned areas that they do not want to ventilate. Sealed areas can become highly explosive due to methane gas, and hence the seals have to meet prescribed standards. The bill would require MSHA to expeditiously adopt more protective standards. In addition to requiring seals to withstand more pressure than under the current rules, the Secretary is directed to consider whether it should inspect all seals during construction to be sure they are built according to plan. In addition to requiring an improved standard, the bill would require the Secretary to promptly conduct a special inspection of all current seals in underground coal mines composed of non-traditional materials to ensure they are properly constructed.

(c) Respirable (coal) dust. Black lung continues to be diagnosed among younger coal miners. To eliminate this disease forever, the bill requires the Secretary to expeditiously revise the current standard to reduce the allowable level of respirable dust to that recommended by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. Consistent with other findings by NIOSH, the bill would eliminate the current requirement that several samples be averaged before a citation can be issued, and requires compliance samples to be taken by the Secretary or by placing personal dust monitors on at least 3 miners per shift.

SECTION 10—TRANSITION TO A NEW GENERATION OF INSPECTORS

It takes 18 months to train a new inspector; and government personnel ceilings and retirement rules mean there may be a critical gap in mine safety and health inspectors over the next few years even if there is money appropriated in sufficient quantities to take on new staff. The bill provides that for a 5-year period, MSHA inspector staffing is exempted from personnel ceilings (only funding governs) and from certain pension reductions that make it difficult to use retired inspectors as necessary to fill the gap.

An additional problem for MSHA is to simultaneously provide both enforcement and compliance assistance, particularly for small mine operators. The bill would provide that for a 5-year period, government resources be used exclusively for enforcement, while compliance assistance to the industry be funded exclusively through a user fee. The user fee would be \$100 for every penalty assessed on any mine operator. This money would be used exclusively to provide the industry with technical support and advice, and priority would be given to requests for small mines (those with less than 20 miners).

Because of the unusual nature of these provisions, special monitoring by the Congress is appropriate, and an annual report would be required each of the five years that these requirements would be in effect.

SECTION 11—TECHNOLOGY RESEARCH PRIORITIES

The legislation requires that in implementing its research activities in the next five years, the National Institute for Occupa-

tional Safety and Health give due consideration to new technologies, and existing technologies that could be adopted for use in underground mines, which could facilitate the survival of miners in an emergency.

The bill notes that such technologies include, but are not limited to:

- Longer lasting self-rescuers;
- Two-way communication devices;
- Improved battery capacity and specifications to handle multiple devices;
- Improved technology to determine underground conditions during an emergency situation; and
- Improved technology for mine rescue crews.

RECOGNIZING PAUL REDMAN

HON. PATRICK J. TIBERI

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 16, 2006

Mr. TIBERI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and pay tribute to Paul Redman, an individual who has contributed his time and effort to the central Ohio community for over a decade. Paul's talent has made the Franklin Park Conservatory one of the signature cultural sites in Columbus.

The Franklin Park Conservatory provides an important service to Ohioans. It provides not only a showcase for the beauty of nature but serves as a vital educational source on botanical and ecological matters. The extensive facilities allow thousands of individuals throughout the region to participate in the study and appreciation of nature and various nature-based art.

Paul's professionalism has drawn the premier artists of our day to display their work at the conservatory. His tireless efforts to provide the best exhibits and value for the community have served to enhance central Ohio's reputation for quality people and superior work. His contributions to the civic and cultural landscape of central Ohio will continue to impact generations to come. His exemplary leadership and service have added to central Ohio's growing fame as one of the most vibrant areas in America.

I am pleased to recognize Paul's commitment to central Ohio and his outstanding tenure as Executive Director of the Franklin Park Conservatory. I'm proud to echo the sentiments expressed by so many prestigious voices across the country, and I wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

TRIBUTE TO CHRISTINE BURROUGHS

HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 16, 2006

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise in gratitude to recognize the continued extraordinary achievements, community leadership and contributions of Christine Burroughs, Director of InnVision the Way Home. InnVision is a leading provider of services for homeless and low-income individuals and families in Santa Clara County.

Ms. Burroughs has successfully led InnVision the Way Home since 1991. During

her tenure, she has grown the organization from a small, grass-roots agency into a leading provider of housing and support services to over 16,000 homeless individuals and families in Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties. She managed a staff of 115 at 20 sites with an annual operating budget of \$10 million and \$17 million in assets. She spearheaded the development of many community partnerships and at least 12 capital projects including the building and/or rehabilitation of various shelters, transitional housing facilities, permanent affordable apartments and multi-service centers. Program development included: mental health services, alcohol/drug rehabilitation, job training and children's activities for all ages.

In 1997, Ms. Burroughs was honored as a "Woman of Achievement" by the San Jose Mercury News (Women's Fund) and received commendations from City and County officials, as well as the Management Center in San Francisco. In 2004 and 2005, San Jose Magazine heralded her as one of Silicon Valley's Power 100. Currently, as a member of the San Jose Rotary Club, she serves on 2 committees whose focus is youth development. She is also a long-time member of First Presbyterian Church of San Jose and has served in leadership roles on various local coalitions and boards advocating for the homeless. Christine is a new board member of the Children's Musical Theatre in San Jose.

Ms. Burroughs paved "the way home" for countless people in need of assistance so as to improve their struggle for independence, freedom and dignity. Hope is the mainstay of achieving success, and Ms. Burroughs provided that element of strength for so many individuals and families.

Ms. Burroughs portrayed a pillar of strength, solidarity and integrity, by which all who met her (service providers or beneficiaries of services) became transformed to reach a better plan in life. She has been a tireless advocate for those persons unable to share their voice for themselves or their families. I hereby honor Christine Burroughs, on this special day of her retirement and wish her all the best in the years to come.

CONGRATULATING RECIPIENTS OF
THE NINTH ANNUAL WIRTH
CHAIR AWARDS

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 16, 2006

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker I rise today to congratulate four recipients of the Ninth Annual Wirth Chair Awards. The Wirth Chair was started by my good friend and predecessor, former Senator Tim Wirth. The Wirth Chair is committed to helping governments, businesses and non-profit groups and community organizations form sustainable development partnerships that carefully balance economic, environmental and expanded social welfare objectives and strategies. Their tremendous work is widely respected throughout the country. This year's recipients are very deserving of this prestigious honor.

Good Dirt Radio received the award for electronic media. The program is broadcast from Durango, Colorado. Good Dirt airs radio stories aimed at inspiring listeners to take eco-

logical action in their own communities. Good Dirt is an all volunteer effort. Word is catching on about their good work, and I am confident that they will continue to grow and be successful.

Harumi Kato of the Yamagata Broadcasting Company was honored for her short film entitled "Little Steps in Colorado for Sustainable Living." The program was also broadcast in Japan in October of last year. She plans to have more viewings in Japan in the future because she wants people there to know "that despite not signing the Kyoto Protocols, some Americans are really concerned about taking action in many ways to protect our environment by practicing sustainable living."

Rick Gilliam of Western Resource Advocates was the primary author of Amendment 37. This was the first time that a renewable energy standard was put to a popular vote. The successful initiative required that 10 percent of Colorado's electricity be derived from renewable sources by 2015. I campaigned vigorously for this initiative and saw firsthand how hard the people associated with this effort worked on the campaign. It was because of their commitment that the initiative was passed despite being out spent ten-to-one by the opposition. Morey Wolfson, Robin Hubbard, Ron Larson, Matt Baker, Ron Lehr, Ken Regelson and Stephanie Bonin were all instrumental getting Amendment 37 passed.

Finally, the City of Denver was recognized for its historic sustainability initiative, "Greenprint Denver." The initiative advances and supports the integration of environmental impacts into the city's programs and policies, along with economic and social considerations. The comprehensive set of strategies includes: measurably reducing greenhouse gas emissions city wide, developing and implementing a municipal green building policy, increasing residential recycling, and increasing urban forest cover for air and water quality and aesthetic benefits.

I am inspired by all of these laudable efforts. I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating these Wirth Chair Award recipients for their tremendously important good work.

IN RECOGNITION OF PAUL MILLER,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF
KIDANGO

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 16, 2006

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Paul Miller, Executive Director of Kidango, a private, nonprofit agency providing a variety of services to children and families in Alameda, Santa Clara and San Francisco Counties. Paul Miller has successfully led Kidango to become a leader in providing quality childcare and child development services to children and support services to their families.

Mr. Miller joined Kidango in 1979 and has helped the organization grow from serving just 90 children at one Fremont, California center to over 2,800 children attending forty plus centers throughout the San Francisco Bay Counties. Kidango has over 350 employees. Miller points with pride to his dedicated and committed regional and center directors, teaching staff, maintenance, food service and adminis-

trative staff, all who have an integral role in making sure the families and children Kidango serve receive the best quality programs possible.

Recent evidence of Paul Miller's ability to seize new opportunities and offer quality programs for children is readily apparent in Union City, California, where Kidango operates a preschool program on every New Haven Unified School District campus. Building on a 20-year relationship, the school district and Kidango launched a Preschool for All program in 2001. By the following year, Union City has the distinction of being the first district in the State of California to offer Preschool for All. The flagship New Haven-Kidango Preschool for All program has caught the attention of educators and policymakers throughout the State of California.

Mr. Miller continues to work hard to introduce Universal Preschool to other Bay Area school districts and the California Superintendent of Public Instruction has appointed him to the Universal Preschool Task Force.

In addition to his exemplary administrative leadership at Kidango, Paul Miller is a major force throughout the State of California advocating for public policy that promotes quality childcare and early education. He is actively involved in the Child Development Policy Institute, the leader in the childcare and development field on fiscal and public policy matters, and the principal advocate for children and families in California's legislative budget process.

Paul Miller's 30 plus years of advocacy for children and their families are beyond measure. He is committed and dedicated to excellence as demonstrated by the growth and success of Kidango. He works tirelessly with a single focus of inspiring all children and their families by promoting their potential and diversity through quality education and nurturing relationships.

Paul will be recognized at a well-deserved Kidango Staff Appreciation Dinner on May 20, 2006. I join them in appreciating him for his good work.

IN HONOR AND MEMORY OF
STAFF SERGEANT ROBERT HER-
NANDEZ

HON. C.A. DUTCH RUPPERSBERGER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 16, 2006

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today to honor the life of a fallen Maryland soldier, Staff Sergeant Robert Hernandez, a veteran reservist of 24 years who died on the 28th day of March 2006.

Sergeant Hernandez was a member of the 3rd Battalion, 318th Regiment Military Police, 80th Division, U.S. Army Reserve, Fort Meade. He was killed when a makeshift bomb detonated near his military vehicle during combat operations in Al Taquaddum, Iraq.

The 47-year-old soldier was a former member of the Baltimore and Washington Police Departments. He was praised by colleagues for his hard work and jovial personality. He easily earned respect from those who knew him and worked with him daily.

As a member of the Prince George's County force, Sergeant Hernandez offered his expertise in a division that lacked Spanish-speaking